REMARKS

This Amendment is being submitted in view of the Advisory Action dated January 11, 2005. Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the amendments and remarks presented herein.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner observed that the Amendment dated December 17, 2004 does not place the application in condition for allowance because "the claims do not preclude the ball carrying sleeve [of Connell] from anticipating the claimed invention."

In view of the Examiners observation, Claim 1 has been amended explicitly to recite that the tube of the central bearing has an outer peripheral surface in slidable contact with an inner peripheral surface of the bore of the upper column assembly. As such, Claim 1 clearly excludes ball carrying sleeve as taught be Connell, which has no contact with the adjacent tubes and serves merely to hold a plurality of balls. Furthermore, independent Claim 8, as previously presented, explicitly recites that the central bearing tube has an outer peripheral surface in slidable contact with an inner peripheral surface of the bore of the

upper column assembly, again precluding a mere ball

carrying sleeve as taught be Connell.

Accordingly, considering the preceding remarks in

conjunction with those of the Amendment dated December 17,

2004, the outstanding rejections should be withdrawn and

this application should now be passed to issue.

Dependent Claim 14 has been amended to avoid
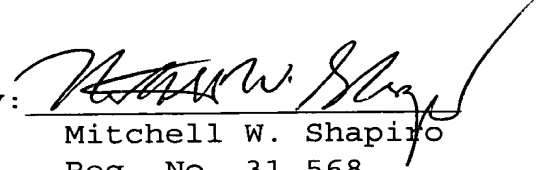
redundancy with respect to amended Claim 1.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to

Deposit Account No. 50-1165 any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§

1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to

credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension

of time is required in connection with the filing of this

paper and has not been requested separately, such extension

is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

MWS:sjk

Miles & Stockbridge P.C.
1751 Pinnacle Drive
Suite 500
McLean, Virginia 22102
(703) 903-9000

March 15, 2005

By: _____
Mitchell W. Shapiro
Reg. No. 31,568